

MARGOT ASQUITH SAYS LIFE NEED OF MONEY DROVE HER TO WRITE 'THAT BOOK'

Wife of Former Premier Sold Many of Her Jewels to Provide a Home After 10 Years in Downing Street

Look At Her Husband Made as Head of British Government to Live, She Says.

WORKS FROM 5 A. M. TO 11

Now That Lecture Tour Is Over She Is Going to Write Impressions of America.

By the GENTLEMAN WITH A BLOTTER.

MARGOT has come and gone. What impression did she leave on the Americans whom she met and talked to in her contralto voice? What impression did these Americans, at least that portion of them whom she met without footlights between, make on her? The second question may, perhaps, be answered but not by Margot. She eluded it. Verily she is elusive, a true woman, veiled underneath all her unwellings, and to perceive her one is obliged to fight the candle of imagination. But one has to do that in order to understand the simplest human being, and the lady we are speaking of isn't simple; she is complex.

What is the real Mrs. Asquith? Does she know? Probably not—indeed, positively not. At rare intervals a cold white light shows us ourselves. We look with a shudder and are relieved when it fades. How can anybody expect that Mrs. Asquith for all her genuine frankness differs in this respect from other people?

What follows is an attempt to put down simply, without malice or wit or cleverness, precisely the words of this woman who has been justly credited with all three, uttered by her in an interview unsought and unexpected. These words may give her thoughts about America or may conceal them. Let the reader judge for himself.

Because the interview just "happened" may explain why what the English woman said remains vivid even as to unimportant things and the man to whom she said it doesn't have to use his blotter, but lets the ink run where it lists. What he omits are the things Mrs. Asquith put him on honor about when she followed them by saying:

"Remember, my dear boy, I say that to you as a friend and not for publication."

Confidence in Human Nature An Attribute of Margot

"Isn't this mark of confidence in a stranger a clever to be a woman? No practical, intriguing woman would employ a wife so fraught with danger. Straightforwardness is a trait of this very contradictory woman; honorable in her habit of outspokenness she credits others with honor. And in this instance she will not be deceived.

It was while waiting for the Princess Bibesco to come to the party of a hotel to keep an appointment that the door opened softly and a slim, dainty figure in silver gray, with a small toque on a proud head, came in.

"How do you do?" she said; "were you waiting for me?"

"No, but for your daughter, for you are Mrs. Asquith, aren't you?"

"Yes," said the lady, extending her hand.

"Then I am glad to be so fortunate. You may help me to persuade your daughter to do for me what I am going to ask."

"And what is that?" asked she, sitting down on a broad divan and motioning the stranger to a seat beside her. She glanced at her.

"I want a cigarette."

"Have one of mine."

She lighted it, puffed a minute and then said: "Shall we have tea? Meanwhile, tell me what you came to see Princess Bibesco about."

"About you. You have just returned from a tour of the country; you've given Americans an impression that may not be the true woman at all, an impression of a public character, something political, a kind of British statue on which people have

To Write a Book About America



MRS. MARGOT ASQUITH.

gummed all sorts of anecdotes, stories that may be smart but may not be true. I should like to know the woman, not the statue, her weaknesses—some of them—is she fond of her husband, does she love her children? Who could better paint an intimate family portrait than your own daughter?"

Mrs. Asquith listened without a smile, without a change of countenance. Then she said:

"Elizabeth will not do it. And there is no need of doing it. I have done it in my book. Have you read my book?"

Scarcely, her new friend admitted.

Thinks Her Readers Must Know Her Thoroughly

"Ah, if people would only read it seriously they would know me through and through; they would know that the heartiest of occasionally smart sayings that are attributed to me were never mine; they would know what my heart, my husband, my children mean to me. But people so seldom read, and it is so much easier to pick up and retail gossip. I recently heard a woman who was not aware of my being about to say to a group of women: 'I can't bear Mrs. Asquith; she's a horrid creature who goes about making books of her friends' weaknesses.'"

"How do you know that?" I broke in. "Did you find it in my book?"

It turned out that the woman had not read my book, but she had heard things.

"Have you an idea why I wrote that book?" I inquired. Mrs. Asquith, laying a long white hand on her companion's shoulder and looking into his eyes with her own large and black and beautiful eyes. "I will tell you."

"When we left Downing Street after ten years not a penny had been saved. How could one save living there and occupying that position? Friends took in the children while Herbert and I went about looking for a tiny house suitable to our want of income. Mr. Asquith began a great lawyer, but could be at this time of life begin again as a lawyer? Could he desert

his party? The latter was unthinkable.

"So it was selling this and that property, selling my pearls, selling this ring, that brooch. One night I went to bed in deep discouragement and wondering what I should sell next. In the middle of the night I woke up to hear myself exclaiming:

"Margot, you shall not sell another thing; you shall start right in and make some money!"

"By 5 o'clock next morning I was up and at work on my book, 'Margot Asquith.'"

"And since then," pursued Mrs. Asquith, "I have got up every morning at that early hour and worked steadily until 11 o'clock. It's a habit now that I permit nothing to break into; I have worked in this way all through my American visit, for of course I'm writing a book about America."

"And all this, including the wearisomeness of a lecture tour to make money. Have you made it?"

Mrs. Asquith, who constantly presents a pleased visage to the world, but seldom smiles, here broke into a regular laugh.

Doesn't Know Whether Or Not Tour Made Money

"Do you know, my dear boy? I don't know. I have my guarantee, but what more I am ignorant of. My audiences in many places have been very great, especially so in Boston, where the immense Symphony Hall was packed from pit to garret. And everybody heard me readily. I am still a little unjust, I think—made of my first talk in New York. I was just off the ship, tired and weak. I never should have gone on, but was I to flunk at the very outset? Never!"

"In the main I have been treated fairly by your people and have met with great kindness everywhere. I complain only of your newspapers, and not so much of them as of their representatives, who come with their minds prepared as to what I should say, and too often, alas! have printed their preconceptions as my words."

When her daughter came in, an hour after the hour she had appointed, the dialogue, which was rather to be expected, ended. Mrs. Asquith went out of the room leaving the bulk of her American adventures untold. But she can be trusted to pour them all into her new volume, on which she is working daily "from 5 A. M. to 11 A. M."

She has had a new experience which she admits has taught her much. One can find her gliding into a room full of people in London prepared to tell her and with what deep attention they will listen to Margot. English society has long acknowledged what American society had no good opportunity to see—the charm which is an attribute of this remarkable woman.

This has not been general, and perhaps it was to be expected, for they wanted to write something clever, and their ideas and mine about what is clever differ widely.

"Yes, I say it boldly and for what it is worth—there is vast room for improvement in the American newspaper."

Said her caller: "I have heard criticism of the same kind, if not in the same degree, of your English newspapers."

"Never! never would British newspapers dare to put in the mouth of a person what she had not said! Our British papers are far from being perfect; they are slow compared to yours here, which sometimes in their stride ruthlessly tread on truth. But I will say no more about your papers; I have, perhaps, already said too much."

"What in return for our hospitality are you going to say about us?"

"Nice things, nice things," declared Mrs. Asquith, "for my personal interest has been deeply awakened, and along with it has grown in better knowledge my admiration of the best in the American character. I always liked Americans in London; by their sincerity and openness I feel a bond of friendship between them and me. I like them better still after seeing them in their home. A more kindly, hospitable and generous people could hardly exist anywhere. I have found fine people in every city where I have visited, men and women of high ideals which, however, have little chance for developing into action because these ideals are constantly with commercialism. One day when a modest fortune shall seem enough for comfort and for a kind of elegance of living the Americans will present a truly admirable type."

"But my book isn't going to present anything alarming; it will be an appreciation and not a criticism. Perhaps I should add that it is not likely to be too sweet. I don't go in much for confessions. I shall tell the truth, be convinced; but in the main it will be pleasant. It pleases me to be able to do this, do you know, for I am coming back."

Mrs. Asquith is a woman of charm, a feminine charm that ought to work on all men notwithstanding her firmness of fibre. She utters her opinions in a way that admits of no argument and she is as positive as the most strong-willed man. But she mixes them up like the most feminine of women, and this little habit of jumping from bough to branch and back again renders her talk a little hard to follow (for the mere man) and somewhat disconcerting. Leave her alone and she comes back to her point and succeeds in fixing it the way she wants it in the mind of her listener. This non sequitur is a confusing aspect of her book as it is of her conversation, particularly the way she jumbles dates. When one thought she was still speaking of Boston one found that she had already sped to Chicago.

Insular Lady Thinks Truth Was Born in England

Almost the only insularity shown by Mrs. Asquith, her conviction that "the truth" could be found in England and rarely anywhere else. She made no effort to say smart things and there was no malice in what she did say. The lack of correlation was, as has been said, one of the first things to be noticed in her talk as it is the chief criticism made of her book.

Many men and women treat us to this kind of talk, which to fully comprehend we must ourselves supply the missing links. The wonder is none the less that a woman who has read so much and lived so long in an intellectual atmosphere is satisfied to speak and to write disconnectedly.

Counteracting this defect is her naivete, her complete imperceptibility, her taking for granted that her colloquies and dicta will be accepted without question. She would be shocked to have her sincerity doubted. Her facts are what she remembers and if they are mistaken it is because she has forgotten and not because she has tampered with them.

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Whole Process Too Involved and Complicated, Is View of Dr. Judson.

PROBLEMS ARE NUMEROUS

To Become a Doctor, Beginning at Age of Six, One Has 21 Years of Study.

By PRES. HARRY PRATT JUDSON Of the University of Chicago.

A VERY whimsical situation is that in educational organization. Few things, if any, are more complicated, more tangled, one with another, more difficult to reconstruct in any new and simple way. A curious body is a group of educators seeking a solution of one of the many Chinese puzzles in their calling. There will be reams of paper, showing how things are, how they came to be as they are, what are their many and obvious infidelities; then what a multitude of difficulties bristle in the way of every approach toward any new and desirable adjustment. Yes, there certainly should be radical changes, but any attempt to bring about such change will at once cause more trouble than it can possibly remedy. Fear, it can't be done. To be sure, some new complication can be added—no great thing in itself, but the long succession of such things has created the jungle in which our educational system is tangled and is continually adding to its mazes. But to cut paths through the jungle, least of all to clear it up altogether, is quite out of the question. It can't be done.

Dr. Judson Despairs of Educational Jungle

The salient facts, however, are quite obvious and have been copiously discussed. The whole educational process has become too long, too involved, too repetitious. There is lack of cohesion, a very definite lack of sequence.

It is too long. Beginning theoretically with the age of 6, there are eight years in the elementary school, four years in a secondary school and four years in a college. That brings the average student, should he go through all, to the age of 22. Then if he goes on in a normal medical school of high grade he takes four years more, bringing him to the age of 26. Then a year at least as interne in a hospital enables him at the age of 27 to begin the practice of his profession. It will be then several years later before he can find himself fairly established in practice, and, really, to many the age will be 30 or more.

In fact, the record shows that in our best medical schools the age of graduation is about 26½. The hand at least is more facile a few years before that—the laboratory training is more effective and perhaps the mind is more flexible. The course as a whole is too long. In its earlier years it is too long in detail. The eight years of the elementary school should be six. An actual test of a seven-grade elementary school has shown conclusively that the eight grades of work can be done in seven with no loss of training whatever. With proper adjustment and proper attention to sequence the same can be done in six.

Curriculum of Our Colleges Grew by Accident

The American college curriculum is the outgrowth of accident. Its origin antedates any American university. It was at the outset supposed to have English sources—whether public school or Cambridge, or both. In fact, it grew as a hybrid. Rusby and Oxford, perhaps—something of both and not much of either, with gradual accretions from what American life seemed to demand. It never was definitely planned as a coherent part of an educational system, but took shape gradually, more or less fortuitously, and without a very specific aim.

The law curriculum was doubtless fitted in general intelligence to begin reading for one of the learned professions—divinity, law, medicine. An increasing number entered business life with minds made more acute, with knowledge of many things which sweetened life; above all, with experience of men. Men in business, however, insisted that the important thing was not what knowledge the candidate possessed so much as how he had come out in measuring himself with his schoolmates in their common tasks.

All these colleges have given, and the gift is not small. But, meanwhile other forms of education have developed, and they also have grown rather by themselves and without much attempt at coordination with existing agencies.

Schools of law and medicine and divinity have taken form, in some cases superimposed on the college, in others parallel in part with the college course. So-called "graduate schools" have been established, ostensibly intended to provide the college graduate with a specialized training, both in knowledge of a particular field and in the method of original work. But it soon appeared that no hard and fast line divided much of the "graduate" work from a considerable part of the college work, either in content or in method. Many courses are announced as "for college and graduate students."

Then at once appeared the obvious question of the amount of time which should be devoted to professional work in a school of law or medicine after graduation from the college. The law curriculum requires, we may say, three years of study devoted to specific legal subjects. But the college student may very properly elect some such subjects in his senior year. They furnish an excellent body of

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In short, it is recognized that in a college career there really may be courses of instruction which belong properly in a scheme of liberal study, but which also are essential to a course of professional education, and which, if taken by a student in the college course may also be accepted by the professional faculty, fully credited and thereby used to shorten the time required for the degree? If his secondary school work in English or in mathematics was such as

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A similar state of things applies to the earlier work in certain sciences, as physics and chemistry, in history and in English.

A careful comparative study of school and college curricula will show that the overlapping will amount to from a fourth to a third of the entire four years' course for a degree. In other words, in substance the entire freshman year and a portion of the sophomore college year are devoted to subjects of study which are fully treated in good secondary schools. In still other words, the earlier part of the college course is in fact a repetition of the high school or academy. It is not till well along in the second college year that the student wakes up to the idea that he is no longer a mere schoolboy.

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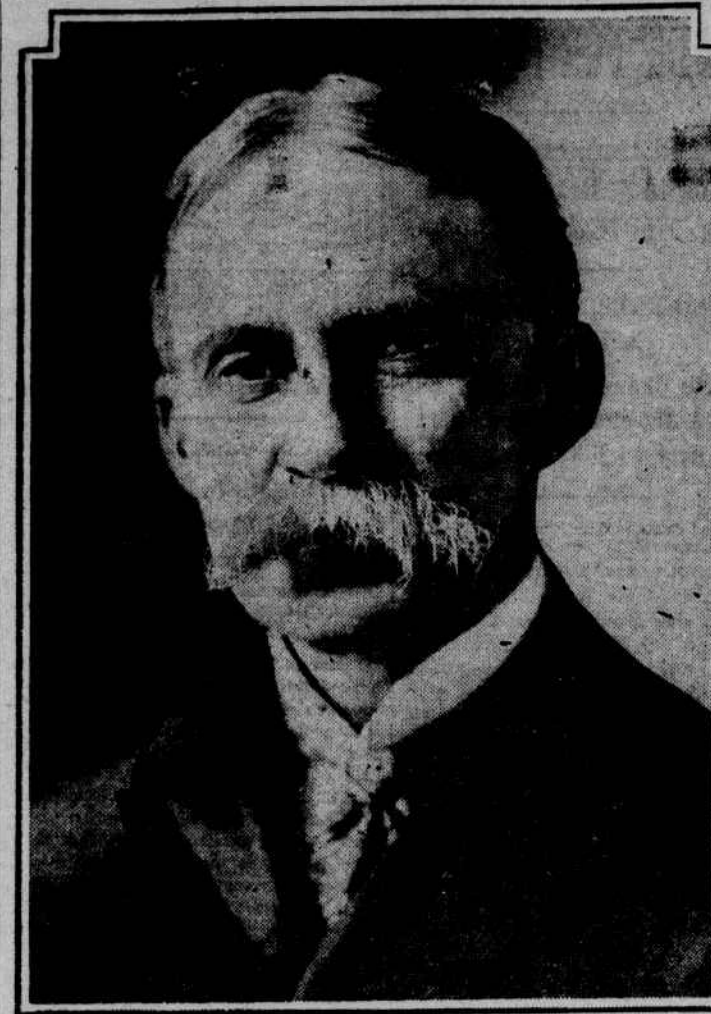
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